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THE  
C H A R A C T E R  
OF A  
Town-Gallant ;

EXPOSING

The Extravagant Fopperies of  
some vain Self-conceited Pre-  
tenders to Gentility and  
good Breeding.



*L O N D O N.*

Printed for W. L. 1675.



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### The Character of a Town Gallant.

**A** *Town-Gallant* is a bundle of *Vanities* composed of *Ignorance*, and *Pride*, *Folly*, and *Debauchery*; a silly *Huffing* thing, three parts *Fop*, and the rest *Hector*: a kind of *Walking Mercer's shop*, that shows one stuff to-day, and another to-morrow, and is valuable just according to the price of his *Suit* and the merits of his *Tailor*; A Spawn of *Gentility* that inherits only the *Vices* of his Ancestors, and is like to entail nothing but *Infamy* and *Diseases* on Posterity. His first care is his *Dress*, and next his *Body*, and in the fitting these two together consists his Soul and all its Faculties. His Trade is making of *Love*, yet he knows no difference between that and *Lust*, and tell him of a *Virgin* at Sixteen, he shall swear then *Miracles* are not ceased. He is so bitter an Enemy to *Marriage*, that one would suspect him born out of *Lawful Wedlock*, For he never hears *Matrimony* named but he swears and starts as bad as at the Salute of a

*Sergeant*, and has forty Lines *Conjugium*, *Conjurgium*, got ready by heart to rail at it. But for most delicious Recreation of *Whoring*, he protests a Gentleman cannot live without it : And vows *Mahomet* was a brave Bully and deserves to be *Worshipped*, because he had the wit to make his *Paradise* a *Seraglio*, and the Joys of the *Blessed* to consist in plump Wenches, &c. The Devil has taught him a *Chemistry*, whereby he can extract *Bawdry* out of the most modest Language, So that he makes *Cato* speak it, And turns Admonitions into obscenity, For his mind is a Room hung round with *Aretines* Pictures, and the Contemplation of them is all his Devotion : Everything with him is an Incentive to Lust, and every *Woman* Devil enough to tempt him, *Covent Garden*, Silk-Gowns, and *Wapping Wastcoatiers*, are equally his Game, for he watches *Wenches* just as *Tumblers* do *Rabbits*, and plays with Women as he does at *Cards*, not caring what Suit he *turns up Trump*.

All his Talk is *Rhodomontado* and *Bounce*, calling a Nobleman *Jack* as familiarly as his Foot-boy, and seldom naming a *Lord* without adding, *My Cousin* : Whatever he does he cries is *like a Gentleman*, and indeed 'tis only like it as a *Broker's* Ware is to a *Mercers*, or *Long-lane* compared to *Cheap-side*, for he is a Wit of an under Region, that does but *Zany* the truly *Brave* and *Noble*, grossly

imitating on the Low Rope, what t'other does neatly on the Higher. He confers Titles of *Honour* on all his *shabby* Companions to create himself the greater esteem with his *Land Lady* (who adores him as a more accomplished Knight than she ever met with in *Parismus* or *Amadis of Gaul*), And when he is going to take a *Run* with a Common *Crack* in the *Park*, Swears he has an *Assignation* from a *Lady of extraordinary Quality*. His *Hangers-on* call him Man of *Blood*, and by his own Report he is as stout as a *Turkey Cock*, yet he never was in any Service but building *Sconces*; nor *Duel*, but with his own Foot-boy or a *Drawer*, for he is so *Prudent* as not to exercise his Courage against any that dare *turn again*, and has got more *Bastards* than ever he made Fatherless Children, yet perhaps at first he will be *Saucy*, and bluster like the four Winds in Painting, but if you begin to be as high as he, strait the *Bubble* breaks, and then he swears,—*I Gad sir, I ever honoured you, but you are a passionate Gentleman and will not understand a jest.*

Think not because I repeat so oft *he Swears*, that I Tautologize in his Character, 'tis only to make the Picture more like the *Life*, for all his Discourses are Buttered with *Oaths*, which he uses *Euphonia gratia*, and is as curious in their *Newness* as the *Fabon*: In which he seems a Kinsman to the *Man*

*in the Moon*, for every Month he is in a New mode, and instead of true *Gallantry* (which once dwelt in the Breasts of *Englishmen*) he is made up of compliments, *Cringes*, *Knots*, *Fancies*, *Perfumes*, and a thousand *French* Apish Tricks, which render him only fit to be set on a Farmer's *Hovel* to scare away Crows. He placeth his very *Essence* in his outside, and his only Prayers are that his *Father* may go to the Devil *expeditiously*, and the Estate hold out to keep his *Miss* and himself in good *Equipage*. He thinks it the rankest Heresy in the World, to believe any Man can be *Wise* or *Noble*, that is in plain Clothes. And therefore looks down with Contempt on everybody, whose *Wig* is not right *Flaxen*; And calls the whole *Tribe of Levy* dull Fellows, because they go in *Black*, and wonders any People should think they can ever speak *Sense*, When they wear neither *Laced Cravats* nor *Pantaloons*.

To trace him *ab origine*, His breeding was under the wing of a too Indulgent *Mother*, who took a World of pains to make him a *Fool*, and attained her end at the Age of Discretion. At School he learned only how to Rob Orchards, and the Generosity of Bribing other Boys to make his *Exercise*, And stayed at the *University* just long enough to *Commence Drunkard*, and get by heart the name of his *College* to vapour with; from thence he posted to one of the *Inns of Court*, but in



four years' time, never read six Lines in *Littleton*, for he loved a *Placket*<sup>1</sup> better than a *Moot-case*,<sup>2</sup> and was more in his *Mercer's Books* than in *Cokes*, or *Plowden's*. For *Learning* he says is *Pedantry*, unbecoming a Gentleman ; and *Law* a thing fit only for *Draggle-tailed Gown-men*, that have no way of raising a Fortune, but by setting (two civil Gentlemen) *John-a-Noakes* and *John-a-Styles* together by the Ears : He has got a shorter Cut to all Arts and Sciences, than *Raymond Lully*, with his *Ars Mirabilis* ; and thinks the seven wise men of *Greece* mere *Ignoramuses*, to one that understands the *humours of the Town*. 'Tis but wearing *fashionable Clothes*, talking *loud*, and Laughing at all one does not *understand*, and the *business* is done.

His whole Library consists of the *Academy of Compliments*, *Venus undressed*, *Westminster Drollery*, half a dozen *Plays*, and a Bundle of *Bawdy Songs* in *Manuscript*, yet he is a shrewd *Linguist*, Impudence he calls the *Boon Assurance*, and unmanliness, the *Genteel Negligence*. He talks nothing but *Intrigues*, *Gustos*, *Garnitures*, *Repartees* and such modish *Fustian*, which he hedges in on all occasions or indeed without any, and if you bar but *forty words*, you strike him *Dumb*. He admires the eloquence of, *Son of a Whore*, when 'tis pronounced with a good grace, and therefore applies it to *every* thing ; So that if his *Pipe* be faulty, or his *Purge*

<sup>1</sup>PLACKET.—A petticoat.

<sup>2</sup>MOOT-CASE.—A point of law.

Gripe too much, 'tis a *Son of a Whore Pipe*, and a *Spawn of a Bitch Purge*. For *New-minted Phrases* he has much enriched our language: 'Twas he brought, *I beg your diversion*, into fashion, and may have a patent for the sole use (as first Inventor) of that noble compliment, *Let me be Damned, and my Body made a Gridiron to Broil my Soul on to Eternity, If I do not Madam, love you confoundedly*.

Till noon he lies a *Bed* to digest his over-night's *Debauch* and then having *Dressed* himself, and paid half an hour's adoration to his own sweet *Image* in the *Looking-glass*, he *Trails* along the streets, *observing* who *observes* him, to the *French Ordinary*, where he swills his paunch with good *Cheer* and *Burgundy*, and tells at dinner how his *Physic* worked last night, and swears never any *Claps* plagued him half so much as that he has now upon him. Cursing his *Doctor* for a *Quacking Bastard*, that understands a *Gentleman's Disease* no more than a *Farrier*. After this the coach is called to hurry him to the *Play-house*, where he advances into the middle of the *Pit* struts about a while to render his good parts conspicuous, pulls out his *Comb*, *Carreens* his *Wig*, *Hums* the *Orange Wench* to give her, her own rates for her *China-fruit*, and immediately *Sacrifices* the fairest of them to the shrine of *next Vizard Mask*. Then gravely sits down and falls half *asleep*, unless some *petulant Wench*

hard by keep him awake by treading on his *Toe*, or a *wanton* compliment ; Yet all on a sudden to show his *Judgment*, and prove himself at once a *Wit* and a *Critic*, he starts up, and with a Tragical Face, *Damns the Play*, though he have not *heard* (at least *understood*) two Lines of it. However, when 'tis done, he picks up a *Miss*, and pinching her fingers in a soft Tone, and looks most abominably *Languishing*, he Whispers, *Damn me, Madam ! If you were but sensible, and all that of the passion I have for you, and the Flames which your irresistible Charms, and all that have kindles in my breast, you would be merciful and Honour me with your Angelical Company, to take a Draught of Loves Posset at next Tavern.* But if he finds her honest and cannot prevail, then he cries aloud, *Damn ye for a Puritanical Whore, what make you in the Pit here : The Twelve-penny Gallery with Camlet, Cloaks, and Foot-boys, is good enough for you,* And so raises his Siege and leaves her.

Whither he goes next I dare not follow him, for 'tis certainly a *Bawdy-house*, by what Name or Title soever it may be *Dignified* or *Distinguished* : Here he meets a Squadron of his Fellow *Gallants*, and having heightened their Spirits with jollity and Wine, they are fit for anything but *Civility* ; And when they vouchsafe to Ramble homewards about One or Two o'Clock in the Morning, they set up the

dreadful *Sa! sa!* more dangerous to meet than an *Indian* Running a *Muck*. In these Heroic humours hath many a *Watchman* had his *Horns*<sup>1</sup> Battered about his Ears; and the trembling *Constable* been put besides the Gravity of his Interrogatories, and forced to measure his Length upon the Ground. The first *man* they meet they Swear to *Kill*, and set all the *Women* on their Heads; and so they proceed till the rattling of Broken *Glass Windows*, the shrieks of distressed *Damsels*, and the Thunder of their own *Oaths*, and *Execrations*, fills all the *Neighbourhood* with horror, and makes them verily Conclude, That the *Devil* and all his Life Guards are going a *Processioning*.

Next Morning his *Tailor*, his *Mercer*, his *Haberdasher*, and his *Sempstress*, stands like a Guard of *Switzers* about his Chamber door, waiting his Up rising: To avoid the *Galling* of whose small Shot, He instantly dispatches a Light Horse-man to call Mr. *Glister-pipe* his Apothecary; Who encountering this desperate Band of Creditors, only with two or three *Glasses* as though that day he had *Purged*, drives them all to their Holes like so many *Foxes*. For the name of Physic is the only *Amulet* against a *Dun*, and a sufficient *Quictus est*, to any beleagured Gentleman.

Thus the *Iliads* of our *Gallants'* Accomplishments, may be cramp't up in a nut-shell. His three

<sup>1</sup>HORNS—i.e., lanthorns.

*Cardinal* Virtues, being only *Swearing*, *Wenching*, and *Drinking*; and if other men's lives may be compared to a *Play*, his is certainly but a *Farce*; which is acted only on three *Scenes*. The *Ordinary*, the *Play-house*, and the *Tavern*. His Religion (for now and then he will be prattling of that too) is pretendedly *Hobbian*: And he swears the *Leviathan* may supply all the lost Leaves of *Solomon*, yet he never saw it in his life, and for ought he knows it may be a *Treatise* about catching of *Sprats*, or new Regulating the *Greenland* Fishing Trade. However, the Rattle of it at *Coffee-houses*, has taught him to Laugh at *Spirits*, and maintain that there are no *Angels* but those in *Petticoats*: And therefore he defies *Heaven*, worse than *Maximinc*, imagines *Hell*, only a *Hothouse* to Flux in for a *Clap* and calls the *Devil*, the Parsons *Bug-bear*, and sometimes the *Civil Old Gentleman in Black*. He denies that there is any Essential Difference betwixt *Good* and *Evil*, deems *Conscience* a thing only fit for *Children*, and ascribes all *Honesty* to *simplicity*, and an unpractiseness in the *ways* and *Methods* of the Town.

By these Extravagancies does he *Signalize* himself above Common Mortals, and counts all other *Dunghill Spirited* Fops, that are not as madly *Wild* and *Wicked* as himself. Thus is *Civility*, *Virtue*, and *Religion* hooted out of the World, and *Folly*, and *Atheism* exalted and promoted: For

this is the *Bell-weather* of Gallantry; whom our Younger *Fry* of Gentlemen admire for a *Hero*. And by these Arts does a man nowadays come to be counted a Person *well-bred*, and fit for a generous *Conversation*, though in Truth 'tis only his *Estate* that Gilds his Vanity, and his *Purse* that can Compound for his Follies; for of himself he is a *painted Butter-fly*: A *Baboon*, usurping Human Shape; or (to use his own silly nasty Phrase)

*Mine A—se all over.* And so I leave him

behind me, till I meet him next

time, either in the *King's*

*Bench Walks*, or an

*Hospital*.

FINIS.





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